



[Hilda Bernstein, 1915-2006](#); [Rusty Bernstein, 1920-2002](#)

## Road to South African Freedom

Among other things, we are trying, in this short series, to recover the understanding that the National Democratic Revolution, taken in full, is a project whose origins can be found [at least 95 years ago](#), and which has a continuous history from that time onwards, both outside and inside South Africa.

We are trying to trace the main steps of the NDR in South Africa and we have consequently touched, among others, upon the Black Republic Thesis, the Cradock Letter, the Doctors' Pact, the Defiance Campaign, the Congress of the People and the Freedom Charter, the Peasants' Revolt, the Strategy and Tactics document of the Morogoro, Tanzania conference of the ANC in 1969, and now the SACP's first full-dress programme, called The Road to South African Freedom (**attached**), which is our second item in this part.

In 1959, the African Communist magazine was launched from exile. It was the first public manifestation of the South African Communist Party, re-established and renamed after the banning and dissolution of the CPSA in 1950.

The Treason Trial that followed the Congress of the People came to an end in 1961 with the acquittal of all the defendants.

Between 1959 and the 1969 Morogoro Conference, a number of things happened. New campaigns had been launched, but came to an abrupt end following the Sharpeville massacre and the banning of the ANC and the PAC in 1960. Umkhonto we Sizwe was launched in 1961.

The raid on Liliesleaf Farm in Rivonia took place in 1963. It was a great setback to the movement.

The SACP published The Road to South African Freedom in 1962. After a few quarterly editions of the African Communist (the “AC”) that had appeared up to that time, and a cyclostyled sheet marking the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Party produced inside the country in 1961, The Road to South African Freedom is one of the first published document of the SACP.

The Road to South African Freedom is about National Democratic Revolution. This can be seen from its section specifically on the NDR, where the document spells out that:

*“This crisis can only be resolved by a revolutionary change in the social system which will overcome these conflicts by*

*putting an end to the colonial oppression of the African and other non-White people. The immediate and imperative interests of all sections of the South African people demand the carrying out of such a change, a **national democratic revolution...***”

It is a long, rich, rewarding document. Because of its length and because of the limitations of booklet printing, we have divided it into three parts.

Things that were said and written in those days continue to be relevant. The Road to South African Freedom is a treasure of the Party and the nation, not only because it is a major element in the history of the NDR, but also because it goes even deeper than the NDR.

I also presents a couple of problems from the point of view of study. One is that it is too long to fit easily within the format of the CU’s courses. Hence it has to be left to comrades to study it individually, or on other collective platforms.

The other problem is that the origins of the document are not widely known. The first, small edition, designed for clandestine distribution, was certainly printed in London. But whether it was written in London, Moscow or South Africa or somewhere else is not known. The process by which this historic document was drafted and approved, and the names of the individuals involved, are not known to the present writer of this introduction.

Pictured above are Hilda and Lionel “Rusty” Bernstein. They were obliged to flee the country after the 1964 conclusion of the Rivonia trial. Cde Rusty had been one of the accused, was acquitted, then immediately re-arrested, re-charged and released on bail under house arrest.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Road to South African Freedom, 1962, SACP](#).
- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here](#).